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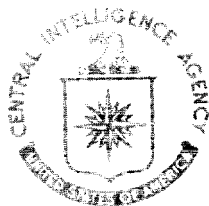


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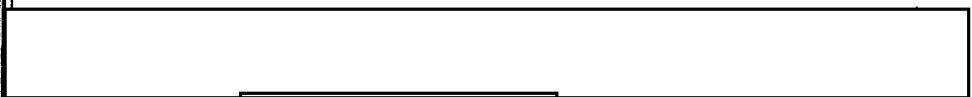
24 September 1963

South Vietnam

SUMMARY



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



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DOS review(s) completed.

ARMY review(s) completed.

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THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

(Information as of 1100 EDT)

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2. Intensive Viet Cong activity continues in the delta. A Vietnamese military spokesman Monday noted that there had been a series of attacks on fortified villages in the Mekong delta since last Thursday. There were three attacks Sunday night alone, in the far southern provinces, according to USMACV. Full details are not yet available, but in one of the attacks Father Hoa's famed "Sea Swallows" lost 20 killed in action and 35 wounded.

3. The sabotage of two USAF C-47 aircraft at Nha Trang Monday, apparently carried out by three Viet Cong who cut through security fences to plant their charges, was a skillfully planned operation and may reflect a broad scale of coordination in the recent intensification of Viet Cong activity. This sabotage, together with Saturday's bombing of a Saigon theater frequented by Americans, may indicate a further increase of activity against American targets.

4. A Pan-Am 707 jet making its approach to Saigon early this morning was hit by a rifle shot while flying at 1,000 feet, seven miles from the airport. The bullet knocked out one engine by cutting an oil line, but the aircraft landed without difficulty and without passenger knowledge that the plane had been fired on. The Viet Cong may have thought the plane was bringing in the McNamara-Taylor mission.

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7. The US Embassy cites fragmentary but accumulating indications that some students are fleeing the cities and joining the Viet Cong. One student says that less than one student in 100 is defecting, but estimates this will increase to one out of five if forthcoming US policy toward Diem does not satisfy the students.

8. The regime-controlled press is publishing a 23 September Toronto Globe and Mail interview with Nhu in which he charges that one of the three Buddhist monks in asylum in the US Embassy in Saigon is a Communist agent. The reference is apparently to Tri Quang, although Nhu did not specify any monks by name. Asked about coup rumors in Saigon, Nhu answered that "no coup can be successful without the overt or covert support of the United States."

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11. Le Cong Thanh, long-time administrator general of South Vietnam's National Assembly, told a US Embassy official on 23 September that the Saigon people want a change in government, and that assembly deputies and civil servants share fully in this attitude. Thanh advocates:

a) regularizing the position of Ngo Dinh Nhu by creating the post of prime minister; (Thanh credits Nhu with valuable qualities and considers him the "thinker of the regime");

b) exiling Madame Nhu permanently; and

c) holding genuinely free elections, with the proviso that all ministers be confirmed in office by such a freely elected assembly.

Thanh said he sees no real alternative to President Diem, and feels the replacement of Diem and Nhu would lead to chaos benefiting only the Communists. He commented that public acceptance of government announcements is "practically zero," and that most people consider the Viet Cong the only alternative to the present regime.

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